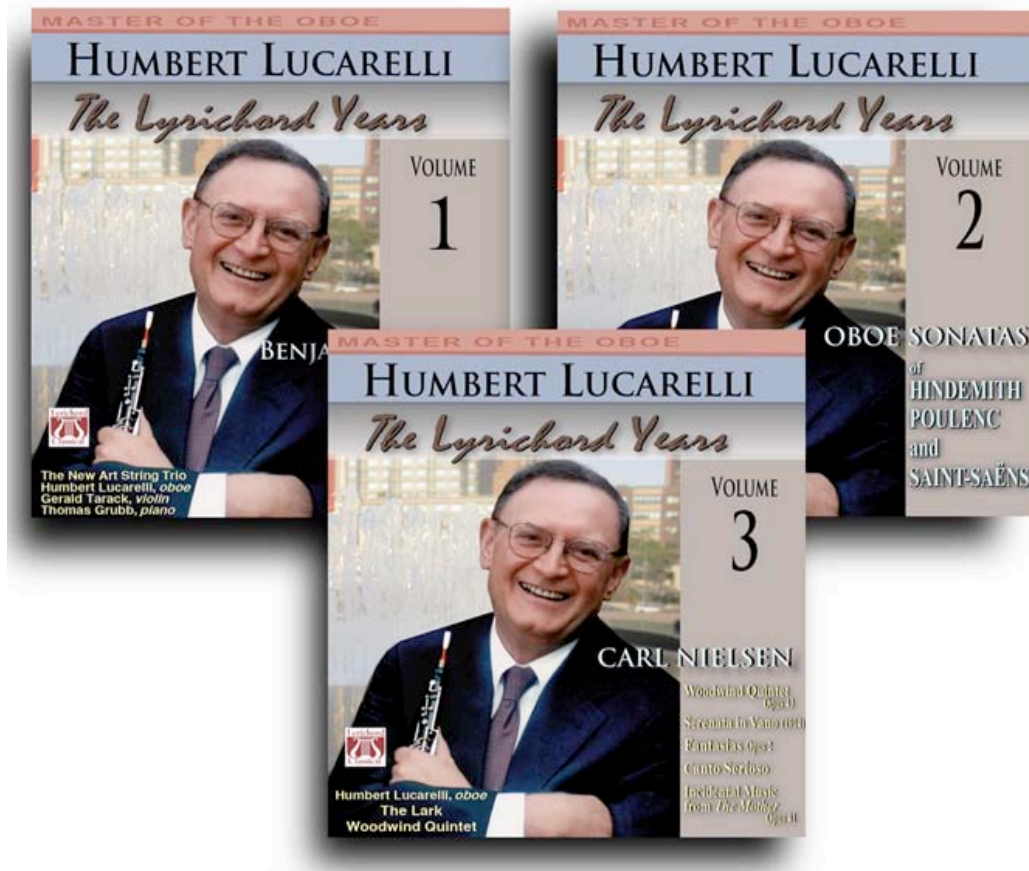


## Humbert Lucarelli: *The Lyrichord Years*



### Humbert Lucarelli

Humbert Lucarelli is “America’s leading oboe recitalist.” (NY Times) His career spans six decades of the twentieth century during which he created a unique path for oboists. Lucarelli began his career at the age of 19 with the Chicago Lyric Opera. After a few years with The Lyric and great musical experiences he decided that his musical life should continue to grow. He chose to leave his post with The Lyric and move to New York City in search of his full musical potential. This pursuit led him to Robert Bloom and chartering the little explored field of the oboe as a solo instrument. The result has been hundreds of recorded works as well as commissions and premiere performances. These particular recordings are the beginning of that journey and display the fantastic uniqueness as not only an oboist but most importantly a complete musician.

Of these reissues Mr. Lucarelli said,

*“Thanks to Peter Fritsch, the founder of Lyrichord Discs, who was a major force in starting it all for me. Our many conversations during the preparation of these releases became a critical part in forming my musical and personal life.”*

*These early issues represent an important part of the oboist's repertoire and gave me an opportunity to speak. Over the past years I have received many communications from oboists and other musicians who greatly appreciated these performances in their original LP format. I am very grateful to Peter's son Nick Fritsch for the generous gift of his mastering talent and enthusiasm in re-releasing these influential recordings".*



***Humbert Lucarelli throughout his career***

***Note about the liner notes:*** We are including the notes for all three Humbert Lucarelli reissues from Lyrichord, here as a single essay, for the convenience of those who may have purchased two or all three of these digitally re-mastered recordings.

***Note about the recordings:*** In equalizing the sound for these recordings, every effort was made to maintain the original, signature sound of Mr. Lucarelli's instrument. In the case of Volume Two: Oboe Sonatas of Hindemith, Poulenc and Saint-Saëns, the deliberate choice was made to achieve the best possible, and truest sound of the oboe, over the sound of the piano.

*Re-mastering and EQ by Nick Fritsch and Humbert Lucarelli, August 2012.*

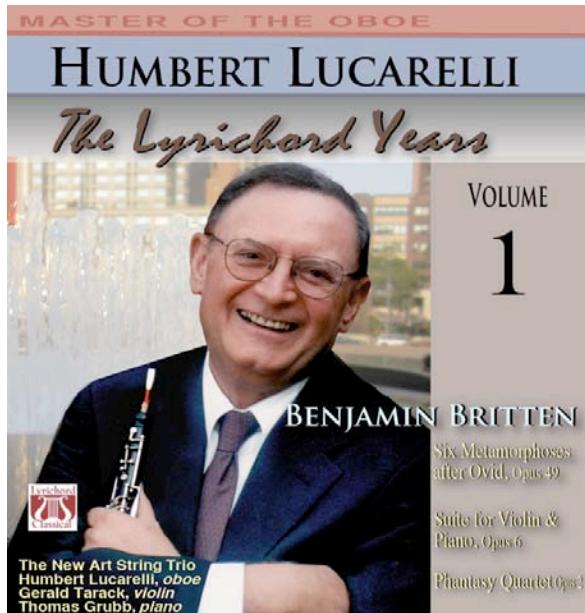
*Cover photograph of Humbert Lucarelli:*

*Graphic design, Nick Fritsch*

*Liner notes by Kristin Leitnerman*

*Reissues produced by Nick Fritsch*

*Humbert Lucarelli's website: <http://humbertlucarelli.com>*



## Benjamin Britten

**“Six Metamorphoses after Ovid”, Opus 49, for solo oboe**

**“Suite for Violin and Piano” Opus 6**

**“Phantasy Quartet,” Opus 2 for oboe violin and cello**

*Humbert Lucarelli, Oboe, Gerald Tarack, violin*

*Thomas Grubb, piano, The New Art String Trio*

*Cat Number LYR 6021 (formerly Lyrichord LLST 7195)*

*Original release: 1968*

### Tracks

- 01 Pan 3:03
- 02 Phaeton 1:26
- 03 Niobe 2:11
- 04 Bacchus 12:28
- 06 Narcissus 2:43
- 07 Arethusa 2:13
- 08 March 2:46
- 09 Moto Perpetuo 2:50
- 10 Lullaby (Britten) 4:23
- 11 Waltz (Britten) 4:52
- 12 Phantasy Quartet, Opus 2. 12:42

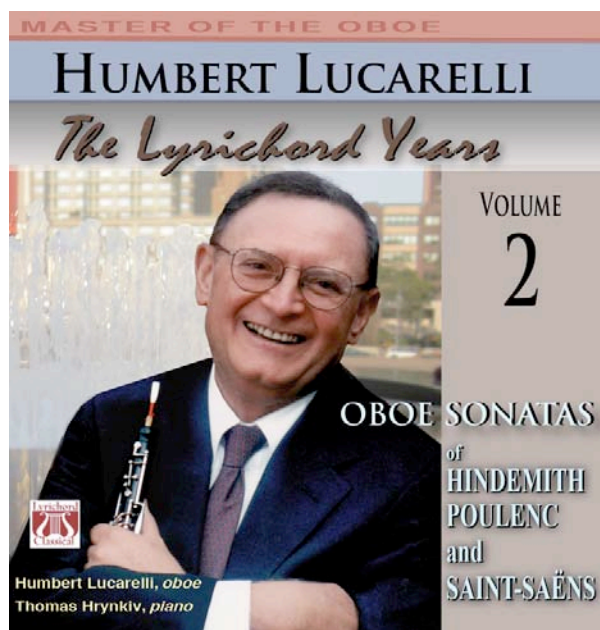
**Benjamin Britten** (1913-1976) stands as one of the greatest composers of the twentieth-century and owes part of that position to his efforts to depart from the prevailing English musical scene established by that of Holst and Vaughan-Williams, to forge a new sound influenced by Mahler, Berg and Stravinsky. He was born on St. Cecilia’s Day 1913 (for which he would later write a choral work) in Suffolk, England to a dentist and talented amateur musician. He began music study early, composing by age five and studying piano at age seven. His early compositions showed great promise and by age thirteen, at the recommendation of his viola teacher, he began taking extra lessons with Frank Bridge, the celebrated composer and violist. He went on to study at the Royal College of Music and it was during this period he started attending an increasing number of concerts, which in turn, helped mature the quality of his compositions. Throughout his life he composed in many different genres ranging from solo

piano works, operas, and small chamber works to full orchestral works such as the War Requiem and even a film score. He enjoyed writing music technically simple enough for children and amateur musicians to be able without great difficulty. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Britten's compositions were always melodically rooted and very accessible to the average listener. When Britten had tired of finding festivals to premiere new operas, he founded the *Aldeburgh Festival* with tenor Peter Pears as "a modest Festival with a few concerts given by friends." This annual summer festival continues to this day, and has become a home for music as well as poetry, literature, drama, lectures and art exhibitions.

The *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid*, Op. 49 guides the audience through six vignettes of Britten's interpretation of Ovid's famous work. It was written in 1951 for oboist Joy Boughton during a time where his work was mostly for the theatre. Each movement begins with a short textual phrase to help set the scene. Pan, the first movement features a six-note gesture that Britten uses throughout the movement in many different permutations. The gesture can be understood as Pan playing his pipe. At the climax of the movement we see the metamorphosis of Syrinx to escape Pan. The second movement narrates the story of Phaeton, "who rode upon the chariot of the sun and was hurled into the river by a thunderbolt." As the movement opens Britten has perfectly detailed the image of the horses hurtling through the sky. Niobe, the third movement is the story of her "lamenting the death of her fourteen children was turned into a mountain." Britten incorporated math into the opening by using seven different notes in the second gesture to represent seven children and fourteen in the fourth gesture. The fourth movement is characterized by the lilting rhythm established at the opening, to depict the drunken strut of Bacchus. Through the movement we hear others at the party, the shouting boys and giggling women. Narcissus, "who fell in love with his own image and became a flower" is the fifth movement and asks the oboist to portray Narcissus as well as his image. As the movement progresses we hear the two meld together as he becomes a flower. The final movement, Arethusa tells her story of becoming a fountain, which ends in a watery flourish.

The *Phantasy Quartet* for oboe and strings, Op. 2, for oboe, violin, viola and cello was written in 1932 while Britten was in school at the Royal College of Music. It was written as an entry in the Cobbett phantasy competition, which called for a single movement work without any breaks, intended to permit compositional freedom. This work is dedicated to Léon Goossens who first performed the piece in August 1933 in an English radio broadcast. At the time Britten composed this work he was quite taken with composers of classical structure such as Beethoven and Brahms, and the four-movement structure found in their symphonies arguably can be found in this piece. This piece commences with an additive march theme first in the cello then viola and violin, which Britten uses in reverse to finish the piece. The oboe enters with a contrasting lyrical melody above the strings, perhaps bringing to light Britten's pacifism. This section, or "movement" ends with a flourish in the oboe. The second section is lively and based on a syncopated theme first stated in the violin and a scalar pentatonic figure in the oboe. The third section, in typical symphony fashion is in 3/4 and much slower. This section includes cadenzas for all three stringed instruments and an oboe cadenza that resembles Vaughan-Williams' writing in his oboe concerto. This cadenza plays with rhythm as the strings have a metronomic triplet accompaniment while the oboe moves through duples, quintuplets and even septuplets. The final section is a recapitulation of the opening moving from a full texture to the beginning solo cello.

The *Suite for Violin and Piano, Op. 6* was composed during 1934 and 1935 and received its first performance in March of 1936 as part of a BBC broadcast with violinist Antonio Brosa. Just three years later Brosa would premiere another work of Britten's, his violin concerto. The *Suite* for Violin and Piano is a series of character movements written just a month after he wrote his piano suite while he was in Vienna, and more than likely influenced by the Schoenberg school. Britten presents a musical motto on the title page alerting the instrumentalists that this composition has serialist connections. This motto is not followed directly, but the shape is, while he also explores the whole tone scale and octave transposition, which gives the piece a much more modern sound compared to his earlier compositions.



## Oboe Sonatas of Hindemith, Poulenc and Saint-Saëns with Thomas Hrynkiw, piano

**Paul Hindemith** *Sonata for Oboe & Piano, 1938*

01 Munter 4:15

02 Sehr Langsam 8:25

**Francis Poulenc** - *Sonata for Oboe & Piano, 1962*

03 Elégie 4:41

04 Scherzo 4:04

05 Déploration 4:28

**Camille Saint-Saëns** *Oboe Sonata in D major, Op. 166, 1921*

06 Andantino 3:15

07 Allegretto 5:35

08 Molto Allegro 2:37

**Charles-Édouard Lefebvre**, *Two Pieces for Oboe and Piano*

09 Andante 3:40

10 Allegro 2:34

*Cat Number LYR 6022 (formerly LLST 7320. Originally release: 1978.*

The sonata is tied to a long history, dating back to the Baroque when two types existed: *sonata da chiesa* (sonata of the church) and *sonata da camera* (sonata of the court). It is from the lineage of the *sonata da chiesa* that many composers such as Bach, Mozart and Beethoven wrote many important compositions titled *Sonata*. The compositions were typically for piano or for solo instrument with piano. From this lineage we arrive in the twentieth century and three fascinating compositions for oboe. Each pulls from this long history of sonatas while pushing the envelope in their respective time.

**Paul Hindemith** (1895-1963) was one of the most significant German composers of his time. He began his musical studies early, learning the violin as a child and later studied violin, conducting and composition at the Hoch'sche Konservatorium in Frankfurt. It was not until 1922 at the International Society of Contemporary Music festival in Salzburg where Hindemith

first gained international attention for his compositions. Five years later he was teaching composition at the Berliner Hochschule für Musik and would soon begin the task of reorganizing Turkish music education, to which young Turkish musicians would recognize him as a real master. By the end of the 1930's he was touring the United States as a viola and viola d'amore soloist, and in 1940 he emigrated to the United States. Hindemith's early style calls upon that of the late romantic, and as it developed moved to a leaner, more contrapuntally complex style with nods to Bach. His musical language is tonal but non-diatonic as it is centered on a tonic and modulates, but every note is used freely.

Beginning in the 1930's Hindemith began writing a series of sonatas for nearly every instrument of the orchestra. His *Sonata for Oboe and Piano* was written in 1938 and premiered by English oboist Léon Goossens and pianist Harriet Cohen. This sonata does not follow the standard sonata form, as it is only two movements, instead of the typical three. The opening movement features a heavy plodding melody that has been characterized as a "bear dance." This theme is contrasted by a more lyrical second theme. The form of the movement is not the typical sonata form but follows an a-b-a' form, where the *b* section acts as a development, yet not on the opening themes. The final *a* section is a condensed variant of the opening material. The second movement begins with a very slow, almost "sleep-walking" melody, which leads into a scherzo on the same opening thematic material. The scherzo moves into a slow recitative-like section and finally returns to the same material of the scherzo, yet as a fugato this time.

**Francis Poulenc** (1899-1963), a native Parisian, is associated with figures of the 1920's known as "Les Six" whose agenda was to craft a new music distinctly different from what was established by Romanticism and Impressionism. Embracing clarity, simplicity, wit and parody they helped to define the genre known as Neo-Classicism.

Poulenc was a self-taught composer whose music is colorful, lively, tuneful and engaging, and unperturbed by excesses of drama. He is especially celebrated for his lyricism and melodic ease. Poulenc's music seems familiar yet fresh and evocative of the eighteenth-century classical style, with a playful novelty that is purely twentieth century. He excels in musical play as his music is, above all else, entertaining.

The *Sonata for Oboe and Piano* (1962) was written during Poulenc's final year in memory of the Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev. The three movements send the listener on a journey through the gamut of emotions one might experience while mourning the loss of someone dear. The first movement titled *Élégie* begins with the oboe alone, as if calling out to the late composer. As the movement progresses we travel through good memories, sadness and even anger. Scherzo is the second movement and evokes a wonderful playfulness. The second section is much slower and draws on his contemporary Gershwin and quotes Prokofiev himself. The final movement titled *Déploration* features all the extremes we have heard in the previous two movements but juxtaposed next to each other in quick succession. It is said that this was the final composition Poulenc ever penned.

**Charles Camille Saint-Saëns** (1835-1921) was a prodigy from a young age, and during his lifetime was thought to have been one of the most gifted musicians of all time. His musical memory was legendary, and his ability at the keyboard astounded even such contemporaries as Berlioz, Liszt, Rubinstein and Wagner. He was able to compose in virtually any style he chose.

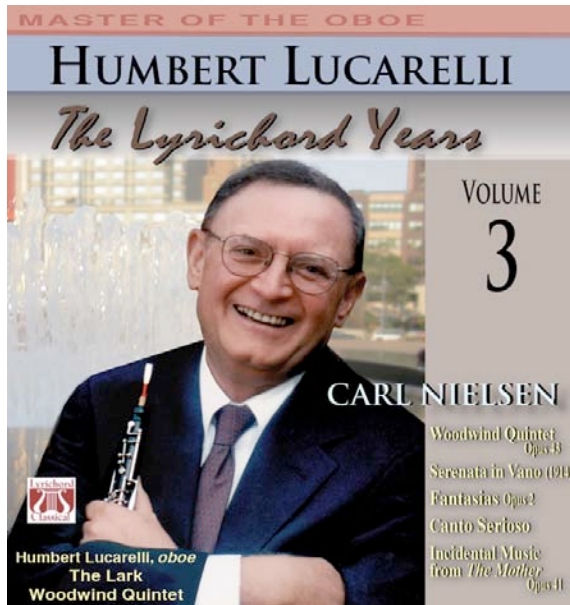
He considered himself to be a formalist, valuing perfection of structure and elegance over emotional inspiration.

In his *Sonata for Oboe and Piano*, Saint-Saëns displays a deep understanding of the oboe as an expressive solo instrument. The first movement suggests an early 1900s version of a *Baroque Siciliano*, and is followed by a charming *allegretto* recalling a *musette*. Two cadenza-like sections that exploit the famous pastoral qualities of the oboe bracket the second movement. The last movement is an unabashed pyrotechnical excursion, displaying the most forthright, purely theatrical capabilities of the oboe. This work (as with sonatas for clarinet and bassoon) was composed in his last year.

**Charles-Édouard Lefebvre** (1843-1917) was a French composer of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. As many musicians of his time, he studied at the Paris Conservatoire with Charles Gounod and Abroise Thomas. It was in 1870 that Lefebvre, with Henri Maréchal, won the Prix de Rome for the *Le Jugement de Dieu*, a cantata. His most famous piece is certainly his *Suite* for woodwind quintet, but he also composed operas, orchestral works and chamber works and in 1895 became the director of Chamber Music at the Paris Conservatoire.

The *Deux Pièces pour le Hautbois* (1897) join the oboe repertoire intended for the end of the year Paris Conservatoire Concours. These are similar to an American jury, which students prepare for at the end of a semester to progress to the next level of study. The major difference is that prizes are awarded at Concours, such as the coveted Premier Prix, which meant the end of formal studies to pursue their career. Lefebvre's *Deux Pièces* first found their way as the required piece for Concours in 1902 with August Gobert being awarded the Premier Prix. The first piece, *Andante* begins with brief piano introductions followed by cantabile oboe themes. The *Allegro* brings some humor to the oboe with technical passages that allow the audience to chuckle while listening.





## Carl Nielsen

### Woodwind Quintet Opus 43, Sera-nata in Vano, other works

#### The Lark Woodwind Quintet

**John Wion, flute, Humbert Lucarelli, oboe, Arthur Bloom, clarinet, Alan Brown, bassoon, William Brown, French horn,**

*also Robert Gardner, cello, Jeffreu Divine, bass, Scott Nickrenz, viola, Libby Croneberg-Brown, harp, Howard Lebon, piano*

#### Woodwind Quintet Opus 43

1. Allegro Ban Marcato (- Nielsen) 9:37
2. Minuet 5:02
3. Praeludium-tema variazioni 12:36
4. **Seranata in Vano** (1914 - Nielsen) 6:48
5. **Fantasy One** (Two Fantasies Opus 1 - Nielsen) 3:43
6. **Fantasy Two** (Two Fantasies Opus 1 - Nielsen) 2:36
7. **Canto Serioso** for French Horn and Piano (Nielsen) 3:27

#### Incidental Music from "The Mother" 1920

8. Faith and Hope are Playing 1:01
9. The Children Are Playing 1:32
- 10 The Fog is Lifting 1:55

*LYR 6023 (formerly LLST 7155)*

*Originally released in 1966*

**Carl Nielsen** (1865 –1931) is arguably Denmark’s most famous composer active at the turn of the twentieth century. He is best known for his symphonies, but also wrote concertos, operas and chamber music. After a failed apprenticeship with a grocer he joined the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion as a bugler and alto trombonist, all while keeping up his violin playing. In 1884 he attended the Royal Conservatory for violin and soon after completing his studies joined the Royal Danish

Orchestra where he began to compose more and more. Less than a year into his appointment he won a scholarship that allowed him to travel Europe, which in turn helped shape his thoughts and ideas about music. In 1925 he suffered a serious heart attack, which forced him to discontinue much of his work, but he did continue to compose two more years.

In Nielsen's first year with the Royal Danish Orchestra he wrote his *Two Fantasies*, Op. 2 (1889). The first public performance was at the Royal Orchestra Soirée in Copenhagen March 16, 1891 by oboist Olivio Krause, the dedicatee and pianist Victor Bendix. Twenty years after Nielsen wrote the delightful *Fantasies* he wrote his own notes on the pieces:

“The two oboe pieces are a very early opus. The first – slow – piece gives the oboe the opportunity to sing out its notes quite as beautifully as this instrument can. The second is more humorous, roguish, with an undertone of Nordic nature and forest rustlings in the moonlight.”

In 1922, while in Sweden, Nielsen wrote his *Woodwind Quintet*, Op. 43 for his friends in the Copenhagen Wind Quintet, which consisted of flutist Paul Hagerman, oboist Svend C. Felumb, clarinetist Aage Oxenvad, hornist Hans Sørensen and bassoonist Knud Lassen. They premiered it on April 30, 1922 in a private gathering at the home of Lisa Mannheimer. The piece is in three movements, the first following sonata form, the second a rustic minuet and the third a set of variations based on a chorale tune of Nielsen's, *Min Jesus, lad min Hjerte faa en saaden Smag paa dig* (My Jesus, make my heart to love thee). This final movement asks the oboist to change to English horn. Nielsen himself wrote these notes on the piece:

“The quintet for winds is one of the composer's latest works, in which he has attempted to render the characters of the various instruments. At one moment they are all talking at once, at another they are quite alone. The work consists of three movements: a) Allegro, b) Minuet and c) Prelude – Theme and Variations. The theme for these variations is the melody for one of Carl Nielsen's spiritual songs, which has here been made the basis of a set of variations, now merry and quirky, now elegiac and serious, ending with the theme in all its simplicity and very quietly expressed.”

In 1914 Nielsen was commissioned by Ludvig Hegner of the Royal Theatre to compose a piece to be used on a tour of the Danish provinces. The outcome of this commission was his *Serenata in vano*. He did not have a lot of time to write the piece, as the piece was composed and fully rehearsed in one week. The tour took place the month of June 1914 with their first performance on June 4. As is standard with Nielsen he wrote his own notes for this piece.

“*Serenata in vano* is a humorous trifle. First the gentlemen play in a somewhat chivalric and showy manner to lure the fair one out onto the balcony, but she does not appear. Then they play in a slightly languorous strain (*Poco adagio*), but that hasn't any effect either. Since they have played in vain (*in vano*), they don't care a straw and shuffle off home to the strains of the little final march, which they play for their own amusement.”

In early 1913 Nielsen wrote a horn competition piece for of the Royal Orchestra, of which he was one of the permanent conductors. This was not just any competition, as Emil Tornfeldt, one of the hornists was not up to the orchestra standards. Martin Sørensen won the competition and

soon replaced Tornfeldt a few months later. The piece he wrote was *Canto Serioso* and has sometimes been described as a song without words. The piece is very pastoral in character and can be broken into three sections including a coda. The piano and horn work together often pulling from each other's material in direct quote or as a variation of it. The piece sits in the low register of the horn for much of the piece, which is rare for the entirety of a piece for solo horn.

*The Mother*, a play written by Helge Rode in 1920, was commissioned by the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen to celebrate the 1920 reclamation of the Jutland region lost to Germany in the war of 1864. Nielsen, while reluctant to commit to the project, agreed and composed an extensive score of no less than twenty-two numbers, most with full orchestra. There were a handful that were not orchestral. *Incidental music from The Mother*, Op. 41 combines three of these chamber works from his score. *The Mist is Rising* is a programmatic interlude, which describes a landscape slowly being revealed as the fog is lifting. *Faith and Hope are Playing* is from the first scene of the play, after the fog has lifted, where two of Rode's characters are miming playing flute and viola. *The Children are playing* is another interlude, this time for solo flute from the fourth scene of the play. The premiere of the play took place on January 30, 1921 and received great praise from the reviewers resulting in no less than thirty-one performances in that one season at the Royal Theatre.

## **The Lark Woodwind Quintet**

The Lark Woodwind Quintet was formed in 1964, and brought together five young artists, each possessing vast experience in the field of chamber music. This ensemble dedicated their concertizing projects to presenting programs encompassing and celebrating a full spectrum of unique wind repertoire.

Arthur Bloom, Clarinet, had degrees in clarinet and orchestral conducting from Julliard, and was also a member of the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble in residence at Rutgers University.

Alan Brown, bassoon, was a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, and member of the Rochester Philharmonic, and played with the Pittsburgh Symphony.

William Brown, French horn, a former student of the well know American composer, Gunther Schuller, was a member of both the Indianapolis and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras, and was also the principal horn of the New York City Opera.

John Wion, flute, originally from Australia, was the principal flutist of the New York City Opera. He studied with such prominent teachers as Marcel Moyse, William Kincaid, and Julius Baker.

The quintet also included, of course, oboist *extraordinaire*, Humbert Lucarelli.

Mr. Lucarelli recently said about this recording,, "*While rehearsing the Carl Nielsen quintet for the recording with The Lark Woodwind Quintet I learned that one of the most important benefits of playing chamber music was that your colleagues challenges, support and inspiration made you play more beautifully than you have ever dreamed was possible.*

In a November 1966 review in Gramophone, Robert Layton said of this recording:

*“A magnificent issue and one which no Nielsen lover can afford to miss.... Each of the players is an artist and phrases sensitively... . The solo variations in the finale show just how carefully these artists pay attention to dynamic nuances, the bassoon variation (No. 7) is most imaginatively played and the oboe and horn variations that follow (Nos. 8 and 9) are no less fine....There is an admirable sense of ease and fluency about this performance and their tempi are beautifully judged throughout....well worth having and to my mind is an altogether admirable disc”*

*–Notes by Kristin Letterman*



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